population to the lasting damage of our national economy in general and rural economy in particular;

(c) what percentage of beef and veal is consumed in India and what percentage is exported; and

(d) how much of it, is cow's meat and how much buffaloes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Export of beef & veal is prohibited from India and the beef & veal produced is consumed in the country.

(d) Buffaloes (males & females) meat weighing about 159704 metric tonnes valued at about Rs. 555 crores was exported from India during 1995-96.

Variation in the cost of Eggs

319. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cost of eggs varies considerably from State to State;

(b) whether Government would take action for fast transportation; and

(c) whether Government propose to provide cold storages etc. for free movements of eggs to stocks at different States to meet shortages leading to increase in cost of eggs as essential item for growth of children?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) All the existing modes of transport viz. air, rail and road are available for the transportation of eggs.

(c) There is no specific Central Scheme for establishing cold storages. However, the existing cold storage facilities both under the public and private sector organisations can be utilised for storage of eggs, as and when required.

Cotton Production

320. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the expected cotton production for the new season;

(b) whether farmers in some areas are shifting from cotton to other commercial crops; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and measures proposed to reverse the trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) The estimates of cotton production for the year 1997-98 have not yet become due from the States. However, as per the information received so far, 69 percent of the normal area under cotton has been covered and the showing of crop is still continuing in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. The condition of the standing crop is reporting to be satisfactory.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The area under cotton in the country has been continuously increasing since 1993-94. It reached a record level of 91.66 lakh hectares during 1996-97. The area coverage under cotton has also generally been increasing in the major cotton growing States of the country.

बाढ़ राहत के लिए गुजरात को केन्द्रीय सहायता

321. **श्री अहमद पटेल:** क्या कृषि मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि हाल ही में गुजरात में भारी वर्षा एवं बाढ़ के कारण जान-माल की काफी क्षति हुई है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है;